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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000527

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND DRL
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2018
TAGS: [SO](#)[CI](#) [PRE](#)[L](#) [PH](#)[UM](#) [PG](#)[OV](#) [KE](#) [ER](#)
SUBJECT: GSE ABUSE EXTENDS BEYOND ERITREAN BORDERS

REF: ASMARA 526

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) maintains a tight watch over its diaspora community, using its embassies as information-gathering hubs and its employees as agents of harassment. Eritrean refugees in Nairobi detailed a well-oiled system of monitoring and harassment orchestrated by the Eritrean embassy there. End Summary.

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

12. (C) Two Eritrean refugees described a system of monitoring based out of the Eritrean embassy in Nairobi. The system involves approximately 51 embassy-supported agents tasked with collecting information on the Eritrean populace in various ways. Methods used include serving as translators for Eritrean visa applicants, interpreters for UNHCR interviews, or even posing as refugees in the UNHCR refugee camps. (Note: UNHCR admits to knowledge of Eritrean and Ethiopian government spies in the refugee camps, but claims it does not have the resources to root them out. End Note.) The government monitors are tasked with collecting data on all Eritreans in-country and reporting on dissidents. It is unclear whether the monitors are actual embassy employees with diplomatic status, are merely paid by the embassy, or are simply Eritreans coerced into mandatory government reporting.

13. (C) Primarily, the agents collect mobile numbers which the embassy uses to send text messages advertising Eritrean community meetings. The messages imply the meetings are mandatory. Ghose who do not show receive threatening phone calls inquiring about their absence. Text messages are sent from mobile number 254713111722. Messages that include the phrase "Important Meeting" indicate a mandatory head count of government supporters. The two refugees insist that most Eritreans attend these meetings out of fear.

PARTIAL LIST OF SUSPECTED GOVERNMENT AGENTS

14. (C) The two Eritreans, who suffered verbal and physical abuse from the Eritrean embassy (reftel), gave a partial listing of Eritreans they suspect of being employed as informants. PolOff has passed the relevant names to Embassy Nairobi's RefCoord:

- Kiflom Hailemariam. One of the four attackers arrested by the Kenyan Central Police Station on September 13 for his physical assault on the former Orthodox bishop.
- Yitbarek Tekle. One of the four attackers arrested by the Kenyan Central Police Station on September 13 for his physical assault on the former Orthodox bishop.
- Berhane Woldemariam. Mobile number 0722113911. Allegedly maintains cover as a truck driver and a UNHCR-registered refugee.
- Eyuel Girmay. Serves as a UNHCR translator. Collects information on Eritrean refugees.
- Senait Tkabo. Mobile number 0721396054. Allegedly travels between Eritrean and Kenya in violation of her refugee status.
- Tesfu Gebregzabher. Mobile number 0720762342.
- Tesfatsion (last name unknown). Mobile number 0720382849.

15. (SBU) Note: Asmara PolOff Ajani Husbands developed this report during a professional development TDY to Nairobi. This cable was coordinated with Embassy Nairobi. End Note.
MCMULLEN